

MEMBER profiles

Individual

An Ed Tech Leader to Watch

Janene Gorham has always had a love for teaching, but her enthusiasm for technology came later. “When I became a fifth grade teacher, one of my students called me a ‘computerologist,’ which amused me, because I never intended to become the technology teacher,” says Gorham. “Technology was just a way for me to be a better teacher—to work more efficiently, to differentiate instruction, to engage students, and to allow students to experience the world outside the classroom.”

Currently an instructional technology coordinator for Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Gorham has garnered national recognition for her innovative thinking. She was named to the National School Boards Association’s 20 to Watch list in educational technology last year after she improved the training



of school-based technology integration teachers in her first year as a central office administrator. “I felt that we had a wealth of talent already in our district, and we didn’t always take the time or have a way to learn from each other. I organized a conference led primarily by our own technology resource teachers, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.”

This year, Gorham is planning for collaboration by bringing in classroom teachers. “My goal is to make the conference a reflection of their interests and needs and, most important, that it isn’t confined to the set number of days. I want the discussion and networking during the sessions to

transfer and continue once the school year begins.”

Currently, Gorham is developing a digital storytelling project for the district. “Each elementary school is sending a team of a library media specialist and a classroom teacher to attend a two-day workshop. We’ll guide the teams through the development of a digital story. They’ll actually work through the project, experiencing it as their students will. It culminates with sharing projects, which are posted and shared among all elementary schools.”

Despite being out of the classroom, Gorham is always thinking about students. “I want students to be engaged in learning that empowers and challenges them to be critical thinkers, allows them to explore the world, and prepares them to be lifelong learners.”

Affiliate

Rejuvenating Nevada's Technology Fervor

While rebuilding during the past few years, Computer Using Educators of Southern Nevada (CUE-SN) adhered to its motto, “Educating students bit by bit.” The organization, which provides a forum for communication between educators and potential educators and fosters their improvement of tech knowledge, is looking toward the future. Even its mission is forward thinking: to encourage, nurture, support, and promote innovative strategies involving existing and emerging technologies to prepare children for the workforce of tomorrow.

“CUE-SN imploded in the early 2000s,” says President Cynthia Ochoa, “and we have managed to assemble a



<http://www.cue-sn.org>

hardworking new and diversified board from a variety of educational positions and responsibilities. We are making a comeback with a growing membership and meetings that need to be repeated because of high responses.”

Ochoa believes CUE-SN’s symbiotic relationship with ISTE contributes to its growth. “CUE-SN views ISTE as an important national/international organization that shares an educational and technology vision and provides valuable resources and opportunities to interact with others. We can collaborate on shared problems and solu-

tions such as increasing membership, setting up and running conferences, and effective boards.”

One of the highlights of membership is the fifth annual Multimedia Festival, a competition and awards festival to encourage, stimulate, and recognize the use of technology within the curriculum by classrooms, teachers, and individual students at all grade levels.

Continuing to support teachers is an important goal, says Ochoa. “CUE-SN wants to provide professional development at no cost to teachers. Our focus is on addressing the needs of teachers in urban environments who experience a wide range of technology capability and access.”

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